

SOCIAL INTERCOURSE

Greg MacPherson

With Robin Hunter and Christian Hansen
Thursday, 14 September at 8pm
The Powerplant
Tickets \$10 at the door

The well-toured, Winnipeg-bred musician Greg MacPherson returns to Edmonton, melding prairie folk styles and rock into a sound that is unique. MacPherson always puts on an entertaining show—besides, it makes going to the Powerplant a little bit better (if their buffet isn't enticing enough).

Yvon Bonenfant

Extending Voice, Extending Gesture
Friday, 15 September at 8pm
The Landing Pad (#201-10923 101 Street)
Tickets \$12 non-members, \$10 members

Yvon Bonenfant is an International Artist-in-Residence who thrives on combining classical and jazz singing with his own unique style. The guest artist at Mile Zero Dance will be performing a 45 minute solo piece that combines vocal proficiency with an emotional stage performance, focusing on the passions of love and life.



Blood Meridian

With Bramwell Park & the Leftovers and These Hands
Saturday, 16 September at 8pm
Sidetrack Café
Tickets \$10 in advance

Vancouver-based Blood Meridian hit the stage at the Sidetrack to promote their debut album, *Kick Up the Dust*. Mixing punk rock with country and blues, the band's album was mixed by the same producers who helped out Nirvana and The Tragically Hip. For only just releasing their debut album, Blood Meridian is already turning heads.

The Yoko Casionos

With Elias, The Harlots and Devilsplender
Friday, 15 September at 8pm
The Powerplant
Tickets \$8 at the door

If you didn't get enough of the Powerplant after seeing Greg MacPherson, you'll be planted-out after seeing Vancouver's The Yoko Casionos. Described as indie alt-rockers on their Myspace page (the definitive locale for music commentary), the band is touring to promote the release of their debut album, *These Are The New Old Times*. Based on the streaming audio from their website, they sound quite mature for a new band, so it should be a good listen.

The Wailin' Jennys

With Mark Davis
Saturday, 16 September at 7pm
Myer Horowitz Theatre
Tickets \$16 advance at Blackbyrd Myoozik, Listen Records, Megatunes, the Powerplant, SU Info booths and Ticketmaster

Singing-songwriting trio The Wailin' Jennys are touring to support their hot, much anticipated sophomore album, *Firecracker*. In 2004, they won a Juno for the best Roots/Traditional for their debut, *40 Days*. The Jennys are just another band from the 'Peg, seemingly completing the chain of Winnipeg or Vancouver based groups destined for E-town this weekend.

JOHN KMECH
A&E pet hamster

Painting from a new Pallett

Final Fantasy's Owen Pallett is testing his true, solo colors, and they're blending quite nicely

Final Fantasy

With Bob Wiseman and the Phonemes
Saturday, 16 September at 8pm
The Powerplant

PAUL BLINOV
Arts & Entertainment Writer

For those of you who've kept your eyes and ears tuned towards Canada's ever-growing music scene, you've probably unwittingly stumbled over the feathery, iron-welded sounds of Owen Pallett.

A violinist and vocalist by nature, Pallett has been one of the most influential hands behind the recordings of noteworthy Canadian acts such as the Hidden Cameras and the Arcade Fire. Pallett has brushed his talents onto many different musical canvases, never fully focused his own career. But, now that his solo work under the moniker Final Fantasy is beginning to pick up steam, fans and critical acclaim, he's undoubtedly going to become a staple in his own right.

"I've been playing in bands since I was 16, but [I've also been] composing classical music on my own," Pallett says. "The crossover of the two is still kind of new to me. I don't really know how to make records or anything, it's mostly just fooling around."

Fooling around has certainly paid off for Pallett, as his second Final Fantasy album, *He Poos Clouds*, is up for the inaugural Polaris Music Prize.

The Polaris Music Prize is a non-profit organization that annually honors those in Canadian music who display merit and the highest artistic integrity, without regard for professional affiliation or sales history. *He Poos Clouds*, along with nine other acclaimed Canadian albums, have made the shortlist for the \$20,000 prize.

"I'm flattered," Pallett says regarding the nomination. "It's a lot of money, too. Well, it's a lot of money for me. [The prize is] probably not a lot of money for Metric, but for me, it would be a big deal. I could pay off my boyfriend's student loan."

"Me and Rollie [Edmonton rapper and fellow Polaris Nominee Cadence Weapon] are rooting for each other," he adds. "But we're both pretty sure Wolf Parade or Metric are going to win."

To be among such highly acclaimed company is nothing short of impressive, especially when the songs from *He Poos Clouds* are based upon the eight circles of magic present in the game *Dungeons and Dragons*—not exactly your typical song content. Videogame references, too, crop up periodically throughout Final Fantasy's songs and albums; *He Poos Clouds* features a song called "Many Lives -> 49 MP," while on Pallett's Final Fantasy debut, *Has a Good Home*, the song "An Arrow in the Side of Final Fantasy" directly swipes a melody from a Super Mario game.

Not all videogame lovers, though, have accepted Final Fantasy with open arms. As of late, Pallett has experienced some backlash as a result using the moniker Final Fantasy (the name is also the title of an ultra-popular videogame series). The problem stems not from Squaresoft, the maker of the games—"I don't think they'll do anything," Pallett interjects, "because I don't call what I do 'video games'"—but from zealous fans hooked on the series.

"Vindictive Final Fantasy game fans have shut down Final Fantasy band Myspaces," Pallett says. "That's kind of annoying. I'm setting up a new Final Fantasy Myspace now—it's under the title 'Pinal Pantasy.'"

Even if his decision to walk the path of a solo artist is being rewarded with a

growing fan base and increasing college radio play (as well as some bizarre responses from gamers), it's still a little bit strange, on his part, to continue down that road, considering the groves of talent he's been involved with. In addition to the Arcade Fire and the Hidden Cameras, Pallett has been a part of Toronto's defunct Les Mouches, and another Toronto band, Picastro; however, it's from this experience that Pallett can pick out both the pros and cons of collaborative and solo art.

"Being in a band is tough because you have to deal with such things as 'manners' and 'tact,'" Pallett concedes. "Being a solo artist is tough because you're plagued by constant self-doubt."

This response may seem a little frank, but Pallett can also attest to the flip side of that, having worked with the finest in Canada's exploding music scene.

"I'm always learning things from [Arcade Fire songstress] Regine Chassagne," Pallett states. "She's filled with amazing ideas."

Of course, Pallett's involvement with other musical acts sing a special little note in his heart, but, as Final Fantasy picks up speed, the real question is this: will Pallett's top-notch collaborations cease?

"No," Pallett says.

"But I demand that

future collaborators have the same-or-better level of critical acclaim as Final Fantasy. I will not waste my time with these renegade 'musicians' who refuse to function outside of the boundaries of what the blogosphere considers 'good music.'"

A pause.

"I'm just kidding," he laughs. "I'll work with anybody for nothing so long as I have the time to do so."

